

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CPR-01 SP-02 AID-05 EB-07 NSC-05 RSC-01

CIEP-01 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-01 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 COME-00

/066 W

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R 070939Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8998

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KUALA LUMPUR 0723

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, MY

SUBJ: KHIR JOHARI AND UMNO

1. AMBASSADOR TO US KHIR JOHARI TOLD ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER "THE PENANG STAR" THAT PM RAZAK HAS OFFERED HIM A TWO-YEAR EXTENSION ON HIS TOUR AS AMBASSADOR (PRESENT TOUR EXPIRES AT END OF FEBRUARY). KHIR WENT ON TO SAY THAT THERE IS STRONG CLAMOR (SIC) FROM UMNO, CONSTITUENTS AND FRIENDS THAT HE RETURN TO MALAYSIA AND "PERSONALLY, I FEEL THAT WITH MY PRESENCE HERE I SHALL BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE MY BIT TOWARDS LOCAL POLITICS...."

2. KHIR ALSO SAID THAT HE HAS TRIED TO PROMOTE AMERICAN INVESTMENT IN MALAYSIA, BUT PRESENT RECESSION/INFLATION IN US HAS SLOWED THIS DOWN. HOWEVER, HE FORESEES UPTURN IN US ECONOMY THIS YEAR AND RENEWED INVESTMENT FLOW.

3. COMMENT: PM RAZAK HAS IN RECENT YEARS ATTEMPTED TO PURGE NUMBER OF OLD GUARD UMNO FIGURES SUCH AS KHIR, TAN SRI SARDON, DATUK SENU BIN ABDUL RAHMAN, TAN SRI SYED NASIR, AND TAN SRI JAFFAR ALBAR (SEE K.L. A-108, 8/12/74, P. 3). THESE MEN STILL

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RETAIN SIGNIFICANT GRASSROOTS BACKING AND KHIR (WHO CONTROLS

CENTRAL KEDAH UMNO), WITH STRONG SUPPORT FROM FORMER PM TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN, INTENDS TO CONTEST FOR AN UMNO VICE PRESIDENCY AT PARTY CONGRESS IN JUNE. EXCEPT FOR SARDON WHO, AFTER SERVING ONLY FIVE MONTHS AS PERMREP TO UN IN NEW YORK, HAS BEEN EASED INTO CEREMONIAL, NON-POLITICAL JOB OF GOVERNOR OF PENANG, OTHER FIGURES MENTIONED CAN BE EXPECTED TO STAGE STRONG CHALLENGE TO RAZAK. IF A TREND DEVELOPS WITHIN UMNO AGAINST RAZAK FAVORITES SUCH AS PETRONAS CHIEF TENGKU RAZALEIGH AND HOME AFFAIRS MIN GHAZALI SHAFIE (WHO LACK "COMMON TOUCH"), THEN KHIR'S CHANCES OF OBTAINING VICE PRESIDENCY WOULD BE GOOD.
UNDERHILL

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